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ABSTRACT

This essay demonstrates how politics affected educational policy making at the national level in Malaysia. A historical and social overview describes the country's ethnic diversity and the passage of legislation that was designed to promote universal access to education. The government's higher education policies are evaluated, based on a process model of policy formation that includes the components of effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy, and equity. From the standpoint of the Malaysian government, the higher education policies were successful in ensuring the Bumiputeras (Malays and other indigenous tribal groups) access to and representation in the universities, which reinforced the dominance of Malaysian culture. The government's higher education policies receive an "A" in effectiveness, a "B" in efficiency, a "B minus" in legitimacy, and an "F" in equity. New social injustices have been created by the Malaysian government as part of its effort to correct past injustices suffered by the Malaysians under colonial rule. Based on the above criteria, there is little evidence to support the claim that these higher education policies have been successful. The strategies to bring about greater cohesiveness and unity among the racial groups through a common language, curriculum, and learning experience have resulted in universities that are more polarized along ethnic lines than ever before. Educational policy making is a political process that reflects broader social ends that themselves reflect the interests and powers of different social groups. (Contains 12 references.) (LMI)

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Educational Policy-Making as Power Struggle in a Multi-cultural Society: the Malaysian Case
(revised draft)

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Educational Policy-Making as Power Struggle in a Multi-cultural Society: the Malaysian Case

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Educational policy has been of major concern to the pubic and educational researchers, but it is perhaps more so to national governments as well as to international organizations like the World Bank and Unesco. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate how politics played itself out in educational policy-making in the context of Malaysia at the national level.

Logically the essay consists of two parts: a theoretical framework and a case study. In the theoretical sections, first, the term "policy" is defined; second, an ideal type (model) of "successful" educational policy is constructed; third, frameworks for interpreting educational policy are presented. In the rest of this study, educational policies concerning access to university education and language of instruction in Malaysia are illustrated and analyzed.

1. What's "Policy"?

The term "policy" is an elusive notion and needs to be clarified and defined in order to pursue our discussion on educational policy. Even a brief review of the usage of the concept reveals that it is used in many different ways to refer to a highly diverse set of phenomena. This is the case both in everyday language and in scholarly publications. Policy is sometimes used in a narrow sense to refer to formal statements of action to be followed, while others use the word as a synonym for words such as "plan" or "program". As a consequence, the notion "educational policy" does not lend itself to precise definition. The usage is multiple and the term is to be found on many levels

and in many contexts of discussion--some very technical and some loosely general.

Here we have no enough space to systematically and critically review both everyday and scholarly usage of the term. Instead we will suggest one view of "policy". Here we defined policy as the implicit and explicit specification of the courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognized problem or matter of concern, and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. Policy also can be thought of as a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue of conflict, and directed towards a particular objective. From the above definition, we can see that policy is focused on purposive or goal oriented action or actively rather than random or chance behavior. It refers to a course of action rather than separate discrete decisions. Usually policy development and application involves a number of related decisions, rather than a single decision.

Public policy in any domain including education can take many different forms of expression and can be directed towards different ends. Some policy finds expression in ministerial statements or government al white papers, some policy is authorized through legislation or regulations, while other policy takes the form of a directive issued by a government.

With regard to ends, some policies aim to regulate or control activity(e.g. compulsory schooling legislation), while others are directed to the provision of a new service or benefit(e.g. provision of scholarships, or a program to assist disadvantaged groups), the establishment or control of an organization (e.g. setting up a new university) or the transfer of resources and wealth from one group to another. Some policies aim to introduce change, while others

are meant to defend the *status quo* or to achieve return to an earlier set of conditions.

According to Grant Harman educational policies fall into four categories.(2) First, there is policy concerned with the essential functions of schools and higher education institutions. A large part of this category relates to curriculum, but it includes policy related to setting objectives and goals, recruitment and enrollment of students, student assessment, award of certificates, diplomas and degrees, and student discipline. Second, there is policy concerned with the establishment, structure and governance of individual institutions and the whole education system or parts of it. A third area covers recruitment, employment, promotion, supervision and remuneration of personnel, particularly different categories of professionals. The fourth and the last category is policy related to the provision and allocation of financial resources and the provision and maintenance of buildings and equipment. Apparently, some categories of policy tend to be of greater concern and importance at the system level than others.

2. An Ideal Type(Model) of A Successful Educational Policy

In spite of the fact that different people may come up with different answers to the question: "What is the successful educational policy?", in this part of the essay we try to identify some criterion or features of a successful educational policy that most people may agree with. They are effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy, and equity.

Effectiveness. Synonyms for "effective" are "operational", "workable", and the parameters for it are usually speed and time. If both Policy A and B have been implemented and achieved the same desired ends, but the former takes a year while the later two years, then we say Policy A is more effective.

Efficiency. A successful educational policy should be efficient in terms of space, time and resources to achieve its goals. In other words, it should require less space, less time and less resources.

Legitimacy. Educational policy is legitimated either through formal procedures or rational choice as any other government policies. Frequently, a proposed policy has to reach the public and the media for discussion, and then go through the legislative process and finally is enacted by a given administration. Governmental policies are generally regarded as legal obligations, which command the loyalty of citizens. People may find the policies of other social institutions(corporations, churches, professional societies etc.) equally important and binding, but only governmental policies involve legal obligations.(3)

Equity. At the system level, a successful educational policy should be a public good. In other words, it serve the interests of the society as a whole. Although absolute equity has never existed in society, discriminations in education should not be based on race, sex, age, or color, and furthermore, dual standards should not exist without sufficient justifications.

In reality, a successful educational policy may not possess all the features, and very often the criterion of a successful educational policy are at odds with each other. In such a situation, it is up to the authority concerned to decide the priority of the criterion, frequently at the cost of some less important ones. A case in point is the affirmative action in American higher education. In order to enlarge the representation of disadvantaged groups (minority, black and women) in American higher education, efficiency and perhaps effectiveness as well are sacrificed to a certain extent. In a word, policy decisions are made according to the political, social and economic context at a given time and place.

The first two criterion(efficiency and effectiveness) are technical aspects of educational policy and can be applied across countries while the last two(legitimacy and equity) concern the social aspects of educational policy, whose connotations may vary from country to country.

3. New Interpretative Frameworks: Towards a Sociology and Political Economy of Educational Policy-making

3.1. A Process Model of Educational Policy Formulation

As with the development of any other public policy, educational policy formulation is a process which involves a variety of actors at many levels. In the case of the United States, educational policy formulation may involve inputs from the local, state and federal governments. A simplified conceptual model of the process is presented in the following:

Table 1. Stages of Policy Process: a Framework for Analysis

Stages	Activities
1. Identifying problems	Recognition o a problem or matter needing government attention; problem gains place on the public agendas and the official agenda; demands are expressed for government action; early mobilization and support for particular strategies.
2. Formulating policy proposals	Agenda is set for public discussion; exploration of various alternatives; formulation of preferred course of action; efforts to achieve consensus or compromise.
3. Legitimating policies	Selecting a proposal; building public support for it; enacting it as a law.
4. Implementing policies	Interpretation of policy and its application to particular cases; development of a program or programs; providing necessary payments or services.
5. Evaluating policies	Studying programs;reporting "outputs" of govern-

ment programs; evaluating "impacts" of programs on target groups in society; suggesting changes, adjustments or replacement by a new policy.

Sources: Adapted from Thomas R. Dye. *Understanding Public Policy* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 6th ed., 1987), p. 24; and J. R. Hough (ed.) *Educational Policy: an International Survey*(London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 17.

Policy does not emerge within a vacuum. Rather, it is developed within the context of different power groups, of particular sets of values, pressures, and constraints, within particular structural arrangements, and most important, at given points of time and place. It is a response to a perceived problem, need, or aspiration.

3.2. Educational Policy Formation as a Political Process

Since a given society is composed of different economic, political and social groups, whose interests are always at adds, and given the universal fact that resources are always scarce, at least the following questions have to be taken into consideration during the policy formation process: **who** will be educated? **how**? at **what** expense? and at **whose** expense? It is round these issues that controversies in educational policy arise.

In reality, during every stage of the educational policy formation process presented above, there are conflicts and contradictions between the interests of different groups. For example, an issue identified by a given group that needs government actions may not be perceived by another group as a concern in the first stage of the process. A case in point are the bills passed against child labor and the laws of compulsory education. Parents, educators, and government officials may think that child labor is a violation of the civil rights and an obstacle to the child's natural development, which may

eventually have a negative effect on national growth. These bills and laws are, however, in direct conflict with the interests of another group, say, the businessmen, who may reduce the costs of their products through employing children.

Generally speaking, in a democracy the (educational) policy formation process involves negotiating, bargaining, competition, persuasion, lobbying and compromise. Which group comes out ahead of the game depends on its strength and the public support it can mobilize. Although consensus is the ideal goal, and efforts are made to achieve it, compromise is a general rule rather than an exception. According to group theory, public policy at any given time is the equilibrium reached in the group struggle. This equilibrium is determined by the relative influence of the interest groups. Changes in the relative influence of the interest groups involved will result in the changes in the public policy(7)

But in an authoritarian country, the rules of the game are different. To a large extent, educational policy formation in such a national context is top-down process with few or merely no inputs from other social constituencies except the government and the dominating group(s).

Public policy-making as a political process can be summarized in the followingdiagram:

Society	**Political System**	**Public Policy**
	Institutions, Processes, Behaviors	
Social and economic conditions		**Public Policies**

including:	including:	including:
Wealth	Constitutional	Civil rights policies
Urbanization	Bureaucracy	Educational policies
Economic system	Party system	Welfare policies
Educational levels	Power structure	Health policies
Class structure	Patterns of participation	Foreign and defense
Racial composition	Interest group system	policies
Religious make-up	Characteristics of elites	Taxing & spending
etc.	etc.	etc.

Figure 1. The Policy System

There are *no* "successful" educational policies for all groups of the society because the interests of various groups are different and even conflicting. Educational policies that solve the problems of one group may create problems for other groups. As far as the social aspects of educational policy are concerned, success is always relative to the interests of given groups. Again, take the policy concerning affirmative action for example. Minority groups(blacks, Hispanics and women) favor the policy because it is an effort toward reducing the social inequalities and injustice from the past. However, there are those who have a negative feeling for the policy because it lowers academic standards and efficiency. Therefore, there are *no* perfect or ideal educational policies that satisfy every segment of the society, and, to the contrary, governments only have policies that are shaped through power struggle and compromise and have different implications for different groups.

4. Educational Policy-Making as Power Struggle: the Malaysian Case

4. 1. Historical and Social Context

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic society that consists mainly of three ethnic groups, namely *Bumiputeras*(a broad term covering Malays and other indigenous tribal groups), Chinese and Indians. By the 1980s the population's ethnic composition, referred to as "racial composition in Malaysia, was 53.0 percent *Bumiputeras*, 35.5 Chinese, 10.6 Indians and 0.8 others.(9) The principal source of racial and political conflicts in Malaysia for the last three decades has been the domination of the economic and educational systems by the Chinese in contrast to the Malay control of the apparatus of the government.

The cause of the ethnic conflict between the Malays and Chinese(and to a lesser extent, the Indians) is deeply rooted in history, particularly in the colonial era. It was the colonial political, economic and administrative mechanisms, particularly the policy of favoring one group to the another, that had planted the seed for the negative relationships between the Malays and non-Malays.(10)

Western influence came to Malaysia, then Malaya with the capture of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511 and later by the Dutch in 1642. Britain's connection with Peninsular Malaysia began with the establishment of the trading settlements in Penang in 1786 and Singapore in 1819. It was during the period of the British colonization that large numbers of hard-pressed peasants from China, India and Indonesia came to Malaya in hope for a better life. They settled in the sections of the cities that were occupied by earlier arrivals who spoke the same language and shared the same customs. The British authority encouraged the ethnic groups to live in separate parts of the cities, a policy that the newcomers found compatible with their interests.

Therefore, in different ethnic communities, different schools were established to meet the particular ethnic needs as indicated by the five types of

schools: Koranic schools, Malay schools, English schools, Chinese schools and Tamil schools.(11) R. Murray Thomas critically commented on the British colonial educational policies this way:

> British educational policy throughout the colonial era was primarily passive and permissive rather than active. The main active role of the government was that of furnishing modest amounts of Malay elementary schooling and of providing government subsidies to English-language schools and to the Chinese schools operated by Christian missionaries.
>
> At no time was universal education a goal of the colonial authorities, not did they plan for unifying the society by means of a colony-wide school system. They were satisfied, instead, to permit a modicum of schooling in the ethnic groups' own languages, thus encouraging a continuation of segregated ethnic communities in a plural society. Critics of the this policy have charged that is was a device intentionally employed by the British to maintain control over the colonies by preventing the ethnic groups from gaining a sense of unity that could result in their wresting control of the region from the Europeans,(12)

In 1955, Malaya achieved self-government, gaining independence in 1959 and adopting the political system of constitutional monarchy with a popularly elected government. The Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1963. With the expansion of tin production and the growth of the rubber industry came a new wave of Chinese and Indian immigrants. These events finally shaped the existing plural society comprising the three ethnic groups---Malays, Chinese and Indians.

Snodgrass summarized the economic and political positions of the three major ethnic groups after the British had relinquished political control and were being replaced in the economic sphere in the early 1950s:

> Economically the Chinese were in by far the strongest position, not only because they amassed relatively large amounts of wealth, education, and experience, but also because of their demonstrated capacity to adapted to changing circumstances and seize newly-offered opportunities. In the political arena, however, the Malays had already seized the initiative, based

> on their historical advantage of legitimacy and their earlier development of nationalism focused on Malaya. Through their preoccupation with the fast-moving affairs in their homelands, the Chinese and the Indians had bungled whatever chance they had for a major political say in the postwar Malaya. When they finally decided to opt for Malays(rather than return to China and India) it was too late to obtain anything more than a junior-partner role.(13)

After independence, the Malaysian government adopted a set of national policies that favored the Malays, and legitimated them through the supreme law of the land, the Constitution, with regard to citizenship, language, religion and the preferential treatment. As a consequence, Malay was recognized as the sole official language; Islam was made the official religion of the Federation; special privileges and priorities were granted to the Malays in terms of access to university education, official employment, government scholarships for study both at home and abroad, the establishment of special schools for Malays and so on. In the appointment of people to administrative positions in education as well as in other sectors of the government, ethnic status rather than education, talent, or experience became the dominant criterion.

These biased policies were reinforced after the racial riots in 1969 and the subsequent government suspicion that the loyalty of the Chinese and Indians was to their homelands rather than to Malaysia. The situation was further complicated by the fact that Malaya Communist Party(MCP) was led by the Chinese-educated intelligentsia.

The official rationale undergirding the favored treatment of the Malays has been that the British colonial policies had put Malays in a disadvantaged economic and educational position in competing with the Chinese and Indians. There has been nothing hidden about the government's favored

treatment of Malays or about the reason for such favoritism. The government's intention has been expressed openly in each of the five-year plans used for charting the course of national socio-economic development. For example, the Third Malaysian Plan(1976-80) explained that:

> ...to the extent that the incidence of poverty falls most heavily on the Malays and other indigenous people, the poverty redress efforts of the government will contribute towards reducing current economic differentials among the major racial groups in the country... The focus of the policy in this regard will continue to be the need to reduce disparities in the ownership and control of wealth in the modern sectors and to diminish the concentration of employment among the Malays and other indigenous people in the traditional agriculture while increasing their presence in the relatively more affluent urban sectors.(14)

4.2. Policies Concerning Access to University Education

The racial riots in the capital in May of 1969 gave rise of the New Economic Policy(NEP), which was intentionally designed to provide various economic and social benefits to the Malays and reduce social inequality.(15) Higher education was perceived as the route to high-level occupations and social advancement. In other words, it was regarded as the major vehicle for the success of the NEP.

The Constitutional Amendment Act of 1971 and the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971 established new administrative structures that brought the universities under close government supervision and control. Within the Ministry of Education the government established the Central University Admission Unit to oversee all admissions into universities in line with the NEP.

It was true that one of the most urgent issues facing Malaysian universities was the need to arrive at an acceptable policy regarding ethnic balance in university enrollment. Within little over a decade this goal was achieved, but at considerable costs of the non-Malays through:

1. Expanding the higher education system;
2. Lowering academic standards required for admission for the Malays;
3. Giving preference for Malays in terms of government scholarship and student loans.

Up until 1969, Malaysia had only one university---the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, which was founded in 1961. After 1969, three new national universities and an international Islamic University were established and expanded. These five universities got their funding from the government and considerably increased the enrollment ratio of the college cohort, especially the Malays and other indigenous peoples.

Prior to 1969, when there was only one university, Malay students constituted only 25,4 percent of the total enrollment, with a probability of access to university education of 2 per thousand, compared with 6 for Indians and 8 for Chinese.(16) Between 1970 and 1985, the enrollment of Malay students at all levels increased substantially, exceeding their proportion of the population at times. At public institutions of higher learning, which are funded by the government, *Bumiputera* participation increased from 41.0 percent at certificate level in 1970 to 65.8 percent in 1985; from 86.5 percent in 1970 to 94.1 in 1985 at the diploma level; and from 40.2 percent in 1970 to 63.0 in 1985 at the degree level.(17)

Even the composition of enrollment changed drastically. The enrollment for Malays, who used to tend to concentrate in humanities and social sciences increased in science and technology fields. In 1970, Malays made up only 1.3 percent of the total enrollment in tertiary level engineering, 12.4 percent in science and 17.2 percent in medicine. By 1975 the respective percentages had increased to 31.9, 25. 8 and 39.1.(18)

But the growth of Malaysian higher education system still could not meet the social demand for higher learning because education has been highly valued by all the three ethnic groups, on the one hand, both as an investment and consumption good, and credentialism on the other.(19) Moreover, quotas were established which discriminated against the Chinese and Indians on the basis of ethnic origin. By 1977, three-quarters of all students admitted to universities were Malays and more than half of all Chinese applicants were rejected. As the enrollment gap widened, discontent among the non-Malays became obvious.(20)

On the other hand, private initiatives to establish higher education institutions were not encouraged the Malaysian government. That's why, there are only a few private colleges even today. When the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) wished to establish the Merdeka University (Independence University) in 1978, the application for a charter was denied by the government, and in 1982, the Federal Court of Malaysia rejected the final appeal for the founding of the university.

As a result of this "positive discrimination" policy, many Chinese and Indians have to either turn to private local colleges, or go overseas for higher education. That's why Malaysia has subsequently been one of the largest foreign student "exporters" in the world. In 1985, there were a total of 32,024 Malaysian students in foreign countries---7,958 in UK, 7,535 in U.S., 5477 in Canada, 5,437 in Australia, 2,969 in Singapore, 1,726 in India and 920 in New Zealand.(21) Another source indicates that there were a total of 34,535 Malaysian students studying abroad in 1985, among which 19,795, or 57.3 percent, were Chinese, and 4,463, or 12,9 percent Indians.(22) Meanwhile, Malaysia has remained in the top ten countries that supply the largest number of foreign students to the United States for the past two decades.

Another measure taken by the government to increase the enrollment of *Bumiputera* was to lower the entrance requirements and consequently, discontent arose as approved in the following passage:

> ...while Malay enrollments have gone up, dissatisfaction about Malay performance has grown at universities. In the absence of a sufficiently large pool of Bumiputera students from the secondary school pipeline to take up the increased allocation of places in the universities, the universities have been obliged to accept many Bumiputera students who perform poorly on the qualifying examination for university entrance. The disparate entry performance level of the Malay and non-Malay ethnic groups has resulted in a performance pattern in which the Bumiputeras have settled at the bottom of the graduating classes".(23)

Empirical evidence also shows that the government scholarship policy favored the Malays to a substantial measure. In a comprehensive empirical study of 33, 226 graduates in 1982-83, Mehmet and Hoong found that:

> Racially, government scholarships both for study at home and abroad are distributed in heavily pro-Malay manner. Thus, almost four out five government scholarships were awarded to Malay graduates. The Chinese share was only 14.4 percent, Indians accounted for 4.3 percent, and East Malaysians 2.9 percent. Moreover, the value of Malay scholarships, as a general rule, was found to be higher than those for non-Malays, with the exception of East Malaysian scholarships.(24)

East Malaysians are indigenous tribal peoples, and are included in the term *Bumiputera*. If the percentage for the Malays is combined with the rate for the East Malaysians, the government scholarships distribution was even more unbalanced with 17. 3 percent for *Bumiputera* compared with only 4. 3 and 2.9 for Chinese and Indians respectively.

4.3. Language Policy

In Malaysia, the communities lacked a common past, common religion, common language, and a common artistic heritage---in a word, a common culture. As early as in 1957, the government, upon the recommendations by the Reid Commission, began to take steps to replace English with Bahasa Malaysia as the only official language and instruction medium. The rationale of this language policy was that through learning and using the language a unified culture based on the Malay values would be shaped, hence contributing to national unity and racial harmony. In line with this policy, specific deadlines and measures were set to implement it. By 1967, it was supposed that all primary and secondary schools(except the Chinese and Tamil schools) would use Malay for instruction. In 1983, all first year courses in the five universities were planned to be taught in Malay for the first time. By 1983, government statistics provided evidence that the declared aims of the policy had been successfully achieved. A newspaper article published to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Independence concluded:

> After 25 years, the Government's most notable achievement is the introduction of a common language, Bahasa Malaysia, which has been accepted by all races, and is used as a medium of instruction from primary to university levels.
>
> With every child being exposed to the national language in school, communication among races will cease to be a problem as they become proficient in the language. This will be an important factor in national integration and unity.(25)

This was an exaggeration of the success of the policy both in terms of academic studies and ethnic relationships. Evidence showed that there were many problems and issues related with the implementation and outcome of the policy. In 1983 when all universities were to adopt Malay as the medium of instruction, only ten percent of book stock in the library of Universiti Sains

Malaysia and very few of its 35,000 visual aids and none of its 5,000 rolls of micro files were in Malay. The situation was equally bad in other universities. Consequently, students at the universities had to rely on translations and hand-outs. But translation of textbooks and other related materials took time, and there were not enough academics to write textbooks in Malay or translate them from English into Malay despite the generous royalties offered---20 percent of the original texts and up to ten cents a word for translations.(26)

Academically, the outcome of the policy was paradoxical and "too successful". The Deputy Minister, Datuk Musa Hitam was quoted to have said that school examinations showed "the non-Malays were second to none in their use of Bahasa Malaysia".(27) In other words, the non-Malays had made up for their linguistic disadvantages imposed upon them. Indeed, examination results suggested that they were outstripping the Malays in their own language. In an evaluation of the outcomes of the government language policy, Mead comments "...the affects of implementation had thus far disappointed both Malays and non-Malays, and had generated further dissatisfaction. The notion that national unity and economic justice would automatically predicate the creation a Malay-medium education system had proven a chimera."(28)

5. Conclusion

Educational policy-making is a political process as demonstrated in the Malaysian case. Are the higher education policies of the Malaysian government concerning admission and language successful? The answer to the question depends on the criteria to define "successful" and where you stand on the issues. From the standpoint of the Malaysian government the higher education policies are successful to the extent that they ensured the

Bumiputeras' access to and representation in the universities; and as a result, re-enforced the dominance of Malay culture.

Let us evaluate the higher education policies of the Malaysian government based on the model of educational policy constructed in the earlier part of the essay.

Effectiveness. The Malaysian higher education policies were effective because it has been an authoritarian country and a top-down approach was used in the implementation of the policies. On this criterion the score of "A" can be given.

Efficiency. It is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the higher education policies based on this criterion because we know about how much money, space and resources were allocated in relative terms. In terms of tranfer of instruction medium from English to Malay, common sense dictates that translating textbooks and other related materials into Malay is more costly both in terms of money and human resources than to using them in the original. Thus a score of "B" seems to be suitable.

Legitimacy. There are two points worth noting. First, the higher education policies were legitimate to the extent that there were "due processes" in their formulation. In other words, there was procedural legitimacy. Second, although there were constitutional foundations to support them, whether the *content* of the policies was legitimate depends, again, on where you stand on the issues. From the viewpoint of the Chinese and Indians who have suffered from this "positive discrimination", the legitimacy of the higher education policies are highly questionable. On the above ground a score of "B -" seems to fit.

Equity. It is on this criterion that the higher education policies are most problematic. These policies have a clear goal and aim to make up for the

economic and educational disadvantages the Malays suffered from the colonial practices. However, it has been overdone. Moreover, Malays have intended to build, in this multi-ethnic society, dominance in political, economic, and educational spheres not through competition, but through suppressing Chinese and Indians. Therefore, if the Malays used to suffer from social inequality from the colonial practices, Chinese and Indians are suffering a new social inequality arising from the Malaysian government's policies, of which the higher education policies have been an integral part. To put in another way, new social injustices are being created by the Malaysian government in trying to correct up the past ones. It is for this reason a "F" is given on the equity criterion.

Based on the above criteria, there is little evidence to support the claim that these higher education policies have been successful. The strategies to bring about greater cohesiveness and eventually unity among the racial groups through a common language, curriculum and learning experience have shown few positive results. Universities today are more polarized on ethnic lines than ever before. "Clearly, the higher education system has achieved the ethnic targets mandated by the NEP, but in doing so it has also intensified ethnic rivalries. The dualistic approach to higher education and national development, providing privileges to the Bumiputeras while striving for greater growth and the creation of high level manpower, has been shown to be contradictory".(29)

The Malaysian case shows that educational policy-making is a political process and can not be discussed outside (of) the broader social ends it reflects. Ends themselves are not, however, disembodied; they reflect the interests and powers of different social groups and therefore are never neutral, never reducible to technical criteria.

Notes:

1. For a discussion of definitions of policy, see T. R . Dye, *Understanding Public Policy* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 6th ed., 1987); R. Rose, *Policy Making in Great Britain*(Macmillan, Scituate, 1977).

2. Grant Harman, Conceptual and Theoretical Issues in J. R. Hough ed. *Educational Policy: An International Survey* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm 1984), p. 15.

3. T. R . Dye, *Understanding Public Policy*(Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 6th ed., 1987), p.21.

4. Bill Williamson, *Education, Social Structure and Development,*(New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979), pp. 25-26.

5. See Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), Michael F. D. Young, ed., *Knowledge and Control* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971); Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum* (New York and London: Routledge, 2nd ed. ,1990); Michael W. Apple, *Education and Power: Reproduction and Contradiction in Education* (New York: Routledge, 1982).

6. Williamson, p. 5.

7. Dye, p. 27.

8. ibid., pp. 6-7.

9. Raj K. Vasil, *Politics in Bi-racial societies: the Third World Experience* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, c1984), p. 4.

10. For detailed discussions of the colonial policies in Malaysia, see Chapter 2, Colonial Legacy: Fiji and Malaysia in Raj. K. Vasil, *Politics in Bi-Racial Societies: the Third World Experience* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1984), pp. 1-55.

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